Illicit drugs trade in Punjab

2851. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether his attention has been drawn to the media report about the trading in illicit drugs in Punjab;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto, particularly about the veracity of the facts and figures highlighted therein; and

(c) the action initiated, if any, especially based on the media report to prevent continuation of the illicit trade in drugs in Punjab, apprehend the kingpins of the trade and bringing them to book?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S. S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) Attention of the Government has been drawn to the series of news reports relating to drug trafficking activities and its ramifications in the State of Punjab, which appeared in The Tribune', Chandigarh.

(b) The seizure of narcotic drugs and intelligence reports indicate that the Punjab State bordering Pakistan continues to be vulnerable to drug trafficking from acros the border. Drug trafficking being a clandestine and illegal activity, no legitimate estimate about the volume of trade or illegal money generated can be made to any accurate degree.

(c) All enforcement agencies working under Government of India are well aware of the problem of drug trafficking and they are putting their best efforts to curb this problem. The Government of India has taken a number of steps to curb drug related offences in the country. These include:

(i) Empowering a large number of Central and State agencies like Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), Customs and Central Excise, Border Security Force (BSF), Central Bureau of Narcotics, State Police, State Excise and Para Military Forces under NDPS Act to ensure its effective implementation, with periodic coordination and sensitization meetings being held by NCB.

(ii) Strict surveillance and enforcement at import and export points, land borders, airports, cargo terminals, foreign post offices etc.

(iii) Intensive prevention and interdiction efforts along known drug routes.

(iv) Improved co-ordination between various drug law enforcement agencies in order to impart greater cohesion and a multi-agency approach.

(v) Demand reduction efforts undertaken by NCB in coordination with NGOs and field units to create awareness against drug abuse.

In order to combat trafficking across Indo-Pak border, specific steps undertaken are:

(i) Exchange of information on traffickers during border meetings between BSF and Rangers of Pakistan.

(ii) Developing intelligence on traffickers smuggling drugs across Indo-Pak border in coordination with other agencies.

(iii) Regular bi-annual meetings with Anti Narcotics Force of Pakistan and exchange of intelligence relating to drug trafficking with NCB.

(iv) Notifying a 50 Kms. area along the Indo-Pak border Customs Act for preventing trafficking of precursor chemicals.

Categorisation of Ajmer city

†2852. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether category of Ajmer city of Rajasthan has been changed from category 'B' to 'C;

(b) if so, what is the basis of the same; and

(c) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (c) Based on 2001 Census, Ajmer (UA) was classified as 'C class city in O.M. issued on 18.11.2004.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi